Everddicted

by

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FINAL EDITION

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RINSE

Five years have passed since I've last seen John.

I recall the day we parted ways, promising one another the next time we met he would have become a successful psychologist with his own office and I would be a famous interviewer with my own TV show. Big dreams indeed, potentiated by the amount of alcohol consumed on that last day of high school, signaling a new step into the grown up world.

Even though we promised to keep in touch, life has a way of trapping you in the "now" which for me was to move out of town and try my luck abroad, without the help or security of my parents.

I forgot all about him during the years, but one does not forget that massive, club-shaped nose of his. There he was - making angry faces while talking on the phone. He aged quite fast considering I left a frail boy behind, but was now faced with a 300 pound man, his visage covered in facial hair with long, wide open, soulless eyes piercing their surroundings. His hair short, but still a mess and his belly strutting out from his black, worn out suit.

He gave off a strong "I'm not the type of guy you wanna mess with" kind of presence, but if you looked close enough you could see an innocent soul trapped inside a golem's body. I waved and he immediately recognized me, giving off a half assed smile. He put his phone down and I greeted him:

"Well if it isn't Johnny the Jew John in front of me, what a delight to meet you again kind sir.''

“Nobody has called me that in a long time,’’ he remarked, staring deep into my eyes. I quickly said:

“Well, no sane person would dare to do so considering the monstrosity in front of him.’’

“Your awful sense of humor never changed, Matt, what brings you into this place of rot and despair? I thought that you were a big city boy now.’’

I told him all about my new job as an up and coming journalist in a big production company.

I told him all about the beauty of having your own company car given to you.

I told him about all the praise I’ve gotten from my boss and coworkers even though I was a fresh hire.

I loved to exaggerate, but even I was surprised by the amount of shit coming out of my mouth.

Reality was much worse; not only was I struggling to make ends meet, I had to write and direct a documentary about a theme of my choice which would have to make it “big" or I was out of the company.

An impossible task indeed, given the time frame of only three weeks with no production crew or adequate equipment whatsoever. And the company car they gave me? Well lets just say the car wasn’t in function anymore after the first drive and now they are charging me with the repairs.

I don’t know how I have gotten myself into this mess.

I was so confident I would make it big and that I would prevail in life. When I finished college I not only realized that I had no practical experience, but that there were at least a thousand more people on the same page as me, with the same dreams. I thought about giving up, but when I got an invitation from a prestigious company that

wanted fresh blood I knew that this was a gift from God himself.

He wanted me to succeed and I was not gonna disappoint Him. I got the job easily, they didn't even ask for my previous work experience or skill in the particular branch they were hiring, which seemed a little odd in the beginning, but was overshadowed by my delusions of grandeur and wishful thinking.

I helped move or clean various equipment while my team leader would explain the mechanics of the item I was involved with.

"Screw this!'' I thought to myself. I already knew all about it, but was patient because they promised I would soon be handling the equipment. So here I was back home with a potato camera they gave me and a hopeless task which couldn't be accomplished.

I had to accept the reality of my situation; they hired me for cheap labor and now that I'm of no use anymore, they are throwing me out as if I were trash to be disposed of.

The only reason why I even came back home was to try and forget all about this and get some real food in my stomach. I have been eating pasta for the last two months and it really was showing on my body; my ribs protruding out of my torso, my legs nothing but thin needles and my face grey and pale as if I was to collapse at any moment.

Even drug addicts looked better than me.

I didn't feel any better either, and now that John had to remind me of the cross I was bearing, I was looking to get out of here as fast as possible.

"This is the Matt I know. Always knew you would make it man. Even back in school you were always the smart one.''

His expression suddenly changed and he continued:

“I didn’t have as much luck back here. My father died so I had to take care of my family. I got a job at a local Walmart and from than on I have been slaving away there. I recently quit and now I’m job hunting again.’’

This all sounded very strange. He wasn’t the type of guy to give up easily. I’m sure his fathers death came as a shock, but years have passed and I couldn’t help myself noticing something else he was hiding.

The more I was looking at his face the more apparent it became.

Something was bothering him big time. “I’m very sorry your loss man and I wish you the best of luck in finding a job, but tell me, is there something bothering you?’’

He replied: ’’Well you don’t look any better than me man. I got myself into some nasty habits, but none of them made my face look as ugly as yours!’’

His obnoxious laugh pissed me off but he did stir some interest in me. Was he using and, if yes, what was his drug of choice? I crossed out heroin and meth from the start - he was too fat for that! But then what?

"So you a druggie now, is that it?’’ I asked in a serious tone.

"Nah man, you know I’m not that type. If I told you, you would be laughing at me.’’ He said with a weak smile.

"Don’t leave me hanging like that. I can help you. I was always there for you.’’ I was becoming really impatient, but he could never resist my charm. No one could.

"Promise not to make a huge deal out of it.’’

"I would neve…’’

"Promise!’’ He interrupted, visibly shaking.

He was starting to scare me but curiosity got the best of me. I looked deep into his blue eyes and uttered: "I promise.''

"I'm addicted to life.'' He finally said.

I was trying really hard not to laugh, but my mask kept cracking. I mean life? Can't you just be normal and be addicted to prescription drugs or something like that? I guess I didn't understand his pain at that time, just as most people who aren't alcoholics don't understand why the alcoholic can just have one drink.

But still, I mean I don't understand such people no matter how hard I try: How can one be addicted to life? I mean: I do live life and it sucks, but for it to become an addiction?

I don't know.

Some people just seem to have been born with bad genes and addictive personalities it seems.

"John, not only will I help you, but I will inform the world of the suffering people like you have to endure each and every day. Are you willing to help me?''

"What the fuck are you talking about man?'' He looked really annoyed.

"How could you possibly know what I'm going through?''

"I'm also addicted to life.'' I lied.

"Can't you see that I'm only half the man I was since I left?!'' I really should have been an actor.

He stood there for a moment, motionless, staring at the ground.

"We are gonna go through this together man!'' He said, while choking down tears.

"We will get through this together!'' He went for a hug and I accepted.

I was back in the game.

I will show this world I was born to be successful.

I deserve to have a job at that company and I will stop at nothing to prove my point. I didn't know how to help John but I knew that he was my ticket to fame and glory.

He would introduce me to a whole new world most people don't dare dream of, and I would have it all documented.

I already have a name for the documentary: ''Everddicted'' I will call it, a screaming face on the front cover and my name on top of it.

My work and I will become timeless!

Entranced by such thoughts, a sudden weakness hit my body and I found myself on the ground. I looked up and saw John, he smiled.

I smiled back and then it all went black.

Being woken up by the sweet noise of construction work was something which I hated about this town. We were a town in construction since the day I was born and still are now.

You really can't please people.

Looking around, I realized that I was in my old room. Everything looked exactly the same as when I left. The big teddy bear holding a heart shaped message "I love you!'' was my favorite toy when I was a child. It was a gift from my mom on my 5th birthday. I always kept it near me when I wanted to relax or just feel secure in someone's arms. He always slept right next to me, guarding me from all dangers of this world.

I abandoned him at the age of 12 when I became too old for him. The rest of the room was just your typical teenage stuff: pictures of half naked women, posters of some idiotic band now nobody listens to, trash everywhere (I'm actually surprised mom left my cum tissues rot for 5 years) and a wooden desk with a really uncomfortable, army style chair.

As I was standing up I heard that familiar squeak, that squeak produced by my bed brought on a lot of frustrating memories. My parents would be downstairs and I would be upstairs trying to rub one out, but after every motion of mine, the damn bed produced those weird noises which could be heard from a mile away.

One time when I was entering the living room after a session my dad winked at me and told mom that the squeaks were becoming stronger, implying we should fix that somehow. They both laughed and I was so fucking embarrassed.

Now that I think about it this room is fucking garbage and I'm fucking hungry.
Mom better make me something else than pasta or I'm fucking killing myself right on the spot.

I was still weak from the malnutrition I was subjected to over the months so walking became more like me stumbling across the objects in my path.

I made it to the kitchen somehow, to be met with the delightful smell of pancakes being cooked on homemade, fresh butter.

"Oh sweety, you are finally awake! I was getting worried.'' She said.

"How the hell did I even get here? What the fuck happened?''

I mean just listening to that sweet, tender voice makes me wanna drown a batch of puppies.

"Is that how one talks with his mother?'' She lamented in a bitchy voice,

"You haven't seen me in five years and this is how you greet your own mother?''

She crossed her arms and turned her body away from me but I was having none of that passive-aggressive bullshit.

"Mom, can you please tell me what happened? I'm not sure how I got here.''

"You never even called!'' Oh God here come the tears and the drama,

"As soon as you left, you changed your number and I never got to hear back! What is going on with you? If John hadn't picked you off the streets you would have been dead!''

"If I don't get something to eat right fucking now, you will have to call John again, only this time, he will have to carry me to my grave!''

While I was munching on my pancakes, she told me all about the happenings while I was gone.

How dad moved to another country for work, how she was left all on her own. How she missed her son and how he has changed so much in both personality and appearance. She even talked about John and the rumor about his alleged drug use. She also talked about him being a good man, born in the wrong circumstances and how he always worked so diligently, a kind-hearted soul.

She also cried a lot, so I couldn't figure much from the muffled grunts she was making.

I didn't care about this shit one bit, I mean what does she expect from me? I was on a mission to become the best because I'm the best!

It’s not my fault the retards around me don’t realize that. I don’t understand how people can just accept their lives of mediocrity, the life society delivered while promising the stars since the day they were born.

I wasn’t having such problems. I was the solar system and all the stars surrounded me.

What did grab my attention, however, was the piece of paper she was holding in her left hand. Now that I noticed I can clearly see how much those five years did to her.

Her skin started to become all wrinkly and dry. She was becoming an old lady even though she was only approaching her 50’s.

"What is that paper in your hand?’’ I felt so calm, the food did its magic.

"Oh it’s a piece of paper John left me, he told me to give it to you.’’

It was an ordinary piece of paper with his number written on it and a short message: ’’Hope you’re alright man, call me, John.’’

"He told me that you and him would work together on some project?’’ That loudmouth John always had to spill the beans, but whatever, nothing can stop me now.

"Yeah that’s right, we are working on a big documentary. Written, filmed and directed by me’’ God how I loved listening to my voice and the words that came out of my mouth. I’m perfection incarnated.

"I’m so glad for you son! Do you need any help?’’ She was super enthusiastic.

How does she think she can help? By standing in my way and pissing me off?

"The budget given to me might come short, so any financial help would be more than welcome.'' I smiled and put on the best face I had in years. She better give me a million dollars.

"Well you know I'm a bit short on cash, if it wasn't for your father sending me money I would be starving… I guess I can give you 500$ but please give them back as soon as you can!''

Looking at the wad of cash in her hand I was sure there was more than a 1000$ in it. I grabbed it out of her hand, took a 100$ note and gave it to her saying:

"You don't need more.''

Being in shock, she took the note and started crying.

It was high time to leave. I couldn't take this bullshit any-more. As I was opening the main door I heard her screaming from behind:

"I hope John takes good care of himself, the monster he has befriended sure won't!''

Yeah whatever bitch. Time to fulfill my dreams.

I had a really old, rusty phone which took ages to boot up. Sometimes, it wouldn't even respond to my incessant button pressing. I think it hated me and did it just to piss me off.

But it served me for years so who am I to complain.

I was staring at the two hands barely touching each other while the phone booted, showing in all capital NOKIA displayed on my screen.

I thought about my family and why they treated me with so much disrespect.

My mother talks about John all the time as if he were her son. She deserves to suffer for all the pain she is causing me. I'm only hers and she should be talking exclusively about me and my problems. How can she expect me to be a good son when she doesn't even care about me?

People are fucking stupid.

I called John and we agreed to meet at the place where it all went black. It was nothing but a small bus station in the middle of nowhere, but I guess that's where addicts do their business or something.

I still couldn't wrap my mind around the fact that someone can really be addicted to life. I mean you live life and then you die. Where the fuck is the addiction part?

But I needed John.

And I also had to behave like an addict, even though I had no idea how to pull that off.

I guess I'll figure something out. I always do.

I arrived first and the scenery was just ghost-like: No cars or people, except for a small news stand trying to lure customers with its bright neon lights.

A fat lady with big glasses, reading a book, could be seen from the small window, separating her and the rest of this prison they called a town. She was trapped in there and to my great amusement, she gave off that vibe of sadness and loneliness. The stench of plague.

The minutes passed slowly and the desperation and dryness of this place was starting to creep me out. I was becoming impatient. Where the hell was he?

Suddenly, a grey Civic passed by and stopped right in front of me. John was in the passenger seat while the driver was unknown to me, a weird looking African American smoking a big Cuban cigar.

They talked to each other for a minute and finally John got out. He was looking scarier than usual, everything about him seemed intense. This was really creeping me out, yet I was happy because this was getting better and better.

The content which I would have in my documentary would be never seen before. I knew that I couldn't film this shit because they would both get freaked out, but I could experience it.

Reconstructing it would be the least of my problems when I actually see what the fuss is all about. I didn't have that piece of shit camera with me anyways.

As John approached me, the car was already gone. You could see the smoky trail it was leaving behind, creating weird shapes in conjunction with the wind. It was actually kinda cool.

"That was my hookup Tyrone, look at this shit man - top notch quality!'' He was very excited.

He gave me three pictures. They were all of the same women and I didn't notice anything special about them.

Sure, she was sexy and half-naked but you know it's two thousand and fucking twenty-six and there exists a thing called the Internet.

I didn't know what to do.

Whatever I said could potentially showcase my ignorance on the subject matter. I decided to just play along and hope that I could somehow match the missing gap of information the more I delved into this world.

"This bitch sure got something to show!'' I laughed nervously.

John looked at me funny and asked:

"Don't you recognize Melissa from high school?''

There was no way this was her, but the more I looked at these pictures the clearer it became - it really was her!

The sweet tender breasts I dreamed of seeing for so long were now in the palm of my hands.

I had the biggest crush on her the first time I saw her beauty. Melissa was everything a man like me could dream of: smart, intelligent, beautiful and very shy.

I wanted to approach her for so long in high school, but I never had the courage to even talk to her. She was with her friends all the time anyways so it wasn't really my fault.

I remember going through her Facebook and creeping for hours, but she was always so conservative in the way she dressed. And now John comes out and hands me the treasure of my teenage dreams, just like that!

This was more than unbelievable.

When John said it was top quality, you better believe it was.

The first picture was filmed inside of a small room. She was looking out of the window. Her frail body positioned sideways really showcased the beauty of her tanned skin. Her long, golden hair loosely covered everything inappropriate.

Perfection.

The second picture was shot at a beach, she was lying on her stomach. She had a perfect ass. This was the personification of life itself.

The third picture showed her sleeping, covered in a thin, white sheet, looking so serene, as if waiting to be woken up by prince charming.

I would have been the one to bring her back to the blissful reality we call life and she would be thankful to me for the rest of her life. There was one question unanswered: How the hell did he get these?

"I see that you like what you see man,'' John laughed, "I got some of my own, let's shoot up!''

"You can go behind this station and I will be hiding behind this kiosk.'' He pointed at the news stand. "See you in like five minutes man, have fun.'' He winked as he left, leaving me with a lighter, a small teaspoon, alcohol and a syringe.

I felt really weird doing this, but I ignored that feeling for two reasons.

Firstly, I had to play my role in order to extract more information from him and secondly, my desire for her to be inside me was killing me. I was on the edge of exploding.

Melissa, here I come!

Lighting the pictures, collecting the thin ashes, mixing them with rubber alcohol until a black, gooey substance emerged. You pull the syringe with the black stuff all the way back. You inject the syringe into your skin. You draw blood. You popped a vein. Jackpot.

How did I know all this? I was a fucking reporter, we worked with or filmed druggies all the time. It was an evergreen news flash. And prostitutes.

When I finished, the mess I created was the least of my problems. I cleaned myself and ignored my surroundings. My head spun. When I searched for the pictures again, they were gone. So fast.

Again, I found myself on the verge of tears - the magic was gone! She was just some meaningless slut I haven't even seen in five years. There was nothing special about her. I was about to punch concrete out of frustration but then I remembered why I was doing this to myself in the first place. The documentary.

I somehow stuffed the remaining ashes into my pockets, trying really hard not to damage any. My pants were irrelevant, the ashes were everything.

I went back to the place where we initially met and waited for John. Some time passed and he came back looking tired and worn out.

"Here man, have a cigarette, it will help with the low.'' He said.

I wasn't a smoker, but whatever. Smoking that cigarette really did relax me, it shifted my attention from Melissa to my coughing and all the smoke coming out of my mouth. I could get used to this.

"You really look fucked up man, was this your first experience with life?'' John asked in a serious but caring tone.

"Life?'' What the hell is he on about?

"Life, dumbass, you must have really hit your head hard when you fell down. So you really know nothing about it?'' He grunted.

"No man, you tell me!'' I was sarcastic, but John didn't pick up on it. Better for me.

He shrugged and started talking, all while fiddling with the ashes in his hands:

"Why are people so drawn to life? What is the number one reason people even use life? What would happen if we were able to patent and sell life to individuals just like a drug? Pictures, videos, gifs, reels… What do they all lack, Matt? A crucial human component - pain!''

This was the smartest John ever sounded and I had known him since childhood.

"This is where life comes into play. It is not that we are the dealers and that the addict is the consumer, it is that the addict is both the dealer and the consumer! I want you to look at the ashes I gave you!''

His voice became louder and louder.

"They look like shit, am I right?''

I nodded.

"Take a good look again!''

It still looked like shit, but my longing for her not only persevered but strengthened, even though ten minutes ago she was the most disgusting object I had ever seen.

"The secret,'' Matt stepped over and put his hand on my chest, "lies in our own body. There is no external agent,

we are the drug, Matt!'' The look in his eyes was unsettling.

"That is why when you get hooked on life, it is almost impossible to quit. Welcome to the game buddy!''

He hugged me and I felt really dirty and betrayed.

Despite these feelings, this was all very exciting and informative, so I asked the one thing that was bugging me about this whole thing: "Why would anyone buy more once they have already bought some and what prevents someone from simply copying and reselling them? It's not alien technology, you know.''

John started laughing:

"You are so naive man.'' He now laughed even harder.

This was really getting to me on so many different levels.

In the past I was always the one dominating the conversation and generally the leader in terms of intelligence and decision making.

John was like a little brother to me who was lucky enough to be able to learn and leech from the master himself. Tag along, little bitch.

But now I feel submissive, stupid and weak - I had become the younger brother I had once looked down upon.

But I knew that I had to be patient and play this game no matter how much it sucked, in the end, the winner would obviously be me. I put on my best stupid Matt face I had and said:

"I really don't understand man.''

He looked at me for a second, as if he was trying to decipher if I was fucking with him or not. Finally he spoke:

"How long until the pictures you hold in your hand become boring? I'm not talking about Melissa herself as a person, but the setting she is in, the way her body is positioned, the gradient of her gaze or the color of the shade her face is currently producing. You will want more from her, but you aren't gonna get any. Don't forget that it is 2026, Matt, people avoid talking to each other in fear of being awkward. Nobody tries to pursue sex anymore, that is what animals used to do in the past."

He continued getting louder, now almost shouting, spittle flying around: "This, man, is the era of life, we are just kicking it up a notch. If heroin is the king of all opiods, then life is the king of our brains!''

I didn't give a shit if this was true or not, my documentary would become popular just from this speech alone.

"To answer your second question, I want you to give me the pictures I gave you. Right now.''

He stood there in complete silence with his palms strutted out towards me. He can go suck a dick if he thinks he is getting a piece of my Melissa. I already consumed all of her. She was mine, an integral part of me.

"See what I mean? Do you really think someone would share their biggest object of affection with someone else even if that someone was their best friend or offering huge amounts of money? Of course not, man, and that is the beauty of life, it uses human imperfection and stupidity against them.''

I could see a tear slip through one of his eyes. He wasn't exactly crying, but it seemed like he was watering his eyes. It was really fun to watch.

"And to add one more thing,'' He now got a hold of himself, "If you are worried about the disastrous low from the drug, then bear in mind that the lower a drug is capable of bringing you, the bigger the illusion the addict harbors of the high it bestows upon him.''

He looked sad again.

"That is all really cool man,'' I said, "But what was the real reason you wanted us to meet over here?''

Like it fucking mattered, I just had to keep the conversation flowing.

"Fact of the matter is, man, that I'm kinda low on money now and that I got this habit man you know…''

"So you want me to give you my hard earned money? This is not the John I remember!''

I sounded just like my mother, it was also so bizarre to the point of being funny.

"Look man, I can get you hooked up. I will help you in helping us. You don't want to be a life addict for the rest of your life, man, we must bring this out to the public, man, but I can't function properly without life, man, so I need some right now if you know what I mean. This shit just isn't cutting it anymore.''

He said while holding some pictures above his head. He took another lighter and set them on fire while saying:

"This is the reality of life! It takes the best and the worst from you and multiplies it by a thousand!''

I was pretending like I was in deep though, as if I was ruling out all the positives and negatives of me giving him money. I really didn't give a shit about money but I had to play it cool and pretend like it was a big deal for me. Big favors offer big compensations.

"John, I knew you since I was just a little boy, we've been through some tough times together and you know that I always helped when I could. Here man, take this.''

I didn't even know how much I gave him. I just took a part from the wad of cash I had in my pocket and handed it to him. Upon further inspection, it amounted to around $300.

"Thank you man, listen man, we are gonna get some good stuff from my buddy Tyrone, sell some, use some and we get your money back like its nothing.'' He sounded like he believed in what he was saying.

The important thing was that now I really had his full trust and that is all I needed to really become a part of the game. He called Tyrone while I bought myself some cigarettes from the shop nearby.

The fat lady didn't even bother to tell me how much I was due, so I threw a ten dollar note at the counter and left.

Fucking stupid mongoloid bitch, doesn't she know who I am?

John looked nervous after he finished talking on the phone, but I wasn't gonna ask him any questions, he had my money and it was his obligation towards me to handle shit from now on.

I had to wait fifteen minutes for Tyrone to show up, enough to smoke another three of those damned, filthy cigarettes.

How do people get addicted to this shit?

When Tyrone arrived, John motioned for me to enter the car.

I took the front seat because I wanted to get a clear look at this so-called dealer. His car was reeking of cigarettes and weed, fast food trash in every place imaginable and

the worst thing of all was the guy himself: He was a fifty something African American with big, stinky, Afro-textured hair. He reminded me of a fucking scarecrow or better yet, a spider with flies strutting their wings all around the web but none actually falling for the fucking trap.

I actually smiled imagining that and he took it as a friendly gesture. We shook hands and he introduced himself in a deep, thick voice, all while having this creepy ass smile:

"Tyron'.''

"You know me and this is Matt,'' John patted me on the shoulder.

He took the spotlight from me. I didn't actually mind.

I was of no interest to interact with this subhuman piece of trash anyways. This was the type of person that enabled racist people to convince the idiots around them of their ideology.

"More company, more money!'' He was smiling again, probably stoned out of his mind.

"So what you got for us this time around?'' John asked.

"You're gonna love this.''

Tyrone gave him one picture of an Asian girl. That's how much I could have seen in those two short seconds while the exchange was happening.

He also gave him ten pictures of something else, only this time I couldn't see anything because he was very secretive about it. Gaze seesawing and shit.

John took one out and judging by the look on his face, he didn't like it very much. Same with the others. I looked at

him puzzled and made a face which asked for an explanation.

He smiled and showed me one of the pictures.
It was Tyrone himself.

Jesus Christ.

The other pictures were identical, only the surroundings in which they were shot were different. I didn't know what the hell was going on but I kept my mouth shut. John asked him about the price and he answered in his own way:

"420 or less.''

I was on the edge of my nerves the entire time, not only did I not know where this idiot was driving, now we had to calculate the prices of the fucking product we were buying.

Luckily, Mike kept his cool and just handed him 120$. So, if John's picture was worth twenty, then we had to sell the others for at least ten dollars a piece to make a profit.

"So, where you niggas headed to?'' Asked Tyrone when John suddenly shouted:

"Holy shit I had a feeling this would happen!''

Two cop cars were ahead of us, one policeman was motioning towards the spot they were parked at.

We were fucked.

Tyrone didn't seem to care at all. I'm not even sure if he could even comprehend the severity of the situation.

John hid the pictures under the seat and I was just completely motionless.

My hands were shaking a little but I didn't feel it all because I was so preoccupied with sucking air into my lungs.

Breathing suddenly became an arduous task for me.

Tyrone stopped the car and a middle aged white male in his 50's approached our car; it was the same cop that told us to stop. He leaned on the window seat, trying to read the situation. He put his sunglasses down and said:

"You boys up to no good? Let me see them papers!''

Tyrone was so calm and collected. He probably has had experience with such things. He might have even gone to prison. I was actually jealous of him. His quirky and clumsy behavior was replaced with a serious, straight face.

He handed his credentials and ownership papers to the cop, who took them back to his car. If the whole situation wasn't so damn tense, it would have actually been funny:

The only one who had to provide any kind of information about himself was the colored person in the car.

We waited for like five minutes, but for me, they seemed like centuries. John was praying the whole time, his hands clasped together, pointing towards the skies. He was as scared as I was, but the only difference was that I didn't know what the charges for possessing life actually were. I thought this was legal, but John's reaction made me nervous as hell. Why was he so frightened?

The policeman came back, gave Tyrone his papers, looked him straight in the eyes and said: "I can smell something here and it ain't your sorry ass!''

"Its just some weed, Mr. Officer, my two buddies over here had a few joints too much and now I'm driving them home.''

"What about you? Look me in the eyes when I talk to you!''

The officer went from zero to a hundred in a heartbeat.

"I don't use drugs when I drive, sir!'' Said Tyrone, never breaking eye contact.

After inspecting every part of his eye with his gaze, the officer sighed and spoke up:

"A little bit of fun ain't gonna do no damage boys, just be careful on the streets. You don't wanna cause no trouble again, now do you?'' He said, winking at Tyrone.

"I will let you go this time boys, but be warned, there is a rumor around town that there have been some underground life sales. You don't wanna be a part of that.''

Why do I have to listen to his pompous speech? I fucking hate cops, not because of their job or their duty but just because they have so much power over me in situations like these.

"You there, boy,'' He pointed at me, "I had one guy, just as young and cute as you. Got hooked on life. Started off with some casual pictures and gifs, now he hooked on that graphic card in no time, you get what I'm saying? Once you taste that shit there ain't no going back. He be craving for life!''

I didn't even feel myself breathing. It was five seconds of nothingness and then a strong heartbeat. I felt like my chest was about to burst open, but I managed to utter a simple yes

I looked very silly, because the cop had already been walking towards the car while I said that. Tyrone got on the road again.

Everyone fell silent.

After about fifteen minutes of driving he stopped near a Taco Bell to get some food.

After coming back he told us that this was our end station. Our sales point.

John and I got out of the car and sat on a small ledge facing the street.

The street was filled with cars and people. People filling the cars and the cars filling the streets and the streets filling the people. Hundreds and hundreds of faces your gaze connects to, only to never be seen again.

It was so beautiful in a very sad and depressing way.

John broke the silence by apologizing and assuring me that this was just an isolated incident. I told him everything was fine and that I didn't care much.

I assured him I knew what I was getting myself into the moment we started talking business. Speaking of business, I asked to have a peek at our stash, to see if he forgot the pictures or not. He didn't.

There was still something unclear to me so I asked him:

"Why don't we just copy those pictures and make hundreds or thousands or millions out of them?'' John looked at the road and said in a monotone, sad kind of way:

"You don't seem to grasp life at all. Why do you think Tyrone sold us ten pictures and not one or two? How many people do you think really want to see Tyrone's life? Tyrone is aware of the demand and that's how much he supplies. We are the drug Matt, never forget that.''

"To whom do we sell this shit then?''

"Don't worry man, this ain't my first time, just follow my lead.'' He smiled.

I swear to God I'll beat the shit out of him for acting all leader-like. I'm the fucking boss of this operation.

In the end, it didn't matter what his or my opinion on this matter really were or how we related to each other. I had to keep reminding myself of that.

I was ready to leave.

John saw that and spoke up: "Just let me enjoy the sunshine a little more,''

Speaking of joy, I thought about beautiful Melissa and my God was she stunning. If only I had approached her back in high school she would have been my wife by now.

My life would have been perfect.

At least I have the opportunity to hold a part of that perfection in my hands. Just looking at the gorgeous ashes made me so excited. The craving got the better of me! I told John that I would be going to the bathroom, he gave me a sad smile and continued staring into the sun or was it just the skies he was after? Didn't matter really.

I entered Taco Bell and was greeted by a "Welcome to Taco Bell, can I take your order, sir?'' You can go fuck yourself and suck on my dick that's what we both wanted to say to one another, but instead, I just pointed at the bathrooms and the bitch nodded.

The bathroom had only two stalls, one of which was occupied by someone doing more than just pissing. That smell of piss and shit really was bugging me, but the more I engulfed myself in the steady arms of my dear Melissa the more I managed to block the rest of the world out.

After injecting, I was too weak to get out at first. I just sat there on the toilet seat with my legs spread apart, my hands behind my head with my somewhat blurry vision focused on the ceiling.

I wasn’t having a single care in the world.

Well, except for the putrid smell surrounding me, but that was alright. Melissa was there with me. I took another peak at the remaining ashes only to be stunned by the lack of emotion I felt for that bitch. I quickly stuffed the trifle ashes in my pockets and somehow made it out of there. I was feeling really down and a bit sleepy, but a cigarette helped me gain my composure back.

John was still focused on the same spot. When he noticed my presence, he just said:

"Time to go.’’

We walked a long twenty minutes when John finally stopped at one of the many apartment complexes we passed by.

Nothing special about them, just a big grey building for small blue people.

There weren’t any elevators so we had to take the fucking stairs to the 9th floor. On our way up, we stumbled upon a man just laying there unconscious on the staircase. It was more funny than sad, we just stepped over him.

John stopped at one of the wooden doors, rang the bell and waited for an answer. You could hear the sounds of the massive amount of locks being unlocked and that screechy noise a door makes when it hasn’t been opened for a long time.

A brunette in her 50’s stood before us, her eyes conveying mysterious energy and sexual lust. "Come in.’’ She said in a soft voice.

I actually liked her voice, it reminded me of my mothers voice, the difference being that it didn’t piss me off. Not yet, at least.

Her living room accurately represented her. It was her place and she had it under control. It's kinda difficult to explain, but you know when someone just becomes a part of his everyday environment? She was that times a hundred.

The pink vase in the middle of the room, carrying lovely red roses reminded me of her puffy and juicy, but unattended lips. The elegance of the forest themed wallpapers surrounding us reminded me of the elegance and perfection of her body; her breasts not too small to go unnoticed and not too big to become the main theme of her personality.

Her ass, noticeable, but you had to give her attention in order for her to flaunt it. Her cat standing on a piano, located at the back of the room, playfully striding its front paws - hitting some keys and missing others were representative of her playful nature and wit which accompanied the mysterious aura her eyes were giving off.

The huge picture frame, with no picture in it, which separated the living room and her kitchen, represented her wrinkly old legs, yet long and with perfect composure. She controlled my gaze as a puppeteer when crossing one leg over another.

She was actually arousing me, but business was business.

I had no time to masturbate.

She didn’t offer us anything to drink, cutting straight to the point:

"So, what have you got for me today, John, and who is this dwarf by your side?’’ She was so charming.

"I got some quality from Tyrone, nothing else. But trust me, this is some highbrow stuff.’’

He said while handing over the pictures.

"And this is Matt, he is my long term buddy and a good addition to the game.''

She didn't pay much attention to me which was really making me jealous of John for even being able to talk to her.

Audibly, I introduced myself as Matt and extended my hand towards her.

She just said, "Mery.'' Giving me a dead fish handshake and never averting her gaze from the pictures.

Does she think she is better than me or something? Listing through these pictures, I saw in her what could be described as arousal and fear, perhaps?

"So how much do you want for this?''

She looked at me, seductively. I quickly blurted out:

"You want them all?'' My inexperience was showing, but luckily she completely ignored my words and was now looking at John.

I was really lucky to have him as my companion.

"We worked hard attaining these, you can't find much better quality around this town,'' His inner Jew did its magic, "Its 30 a piece.''

She thought for a long time. I was too enchanted by her beauty to even care about profit. I wanted her pictures and I wanted them right now. Fuck Melissa.

She finally blurted out, while adjusting her shirt to show off more cleavage:

"I can give you half and something else.''

She stood up and marched to the kitchen. God,you would have to see those ass-cheeks bouncing from one side to another for yourself to really understand the pressure I felt in my pants at that moment.

She came back with a bundle of pictures, all of them which starred her in life.

My favorite was the one where she was posing in front of a sports car, with five bananas. The implication was undeniable. You could see the blood dripping from her reproductive organs, making a pool of excrement and red fleshy chunks of meat in between her spread feet. The blood never really touched her feet, but it was pretty close.

I guess I just found a new fetish for myself, this really is a part of my sexuality that life managed to wake up and I'm eternally grateful for that.

After going through all of the pictures, I looked at Matt who seemed disinterested so I saw this as an opportunity to show these guys that I knew what I was doing:

"These are all low-quality, you can clearly see that they were filmed some time ago. Me and my partner don't accept trades below 1080p, but considering the fact you have been a long term customer I think we can arrange a deal which would be mutually beneficial for both parties.''

She finally paid attention to me. Right about time bitch.

"I will be taking the banana one, you add another 50 to the table and we set.''

"I guess that is fine,'' she answered, "But are you sure you don't want any other?'' She asked in a girly voice.

My silence was answer enough and we proceeded to exchange goods.

"One more thing,'' I said in a condescending manner, "Show me your bathroom.''

She stood up and I followed her to a small room near the exit door. She turned around, now facing me and said:

"Are you sure you don't want anything else from me?'' All while sliding through my body with her nimble hands.

"No, thank you.'' I politely exclaimed.

She finally moved her body out of the way, it was time to satisfy my life addiction craving.

While injecting, I even took the scene which happened in front of the bathroom as some nice mental imagery. I imagined stripping her clothes off and just sucking on those puffy nipples. The thing was, I don't really fuck whores and all women are whores, so the safest way to satisfy your natural urges is to inject life.

As I finished and got out, John was already in front of the main door. He wanted to leave. As we were getting out, Mery nudged me, reminding me I could come visit her whenever I wanted to.

John got even more restless after that, he literally ran outside without saying a word. I followed him, but he was already storming through the stairs so I tried to catch up and see what the hell was going on. When I finally got through the stairs and out of the complex I saw something which I thought I would never see in my entire life.

John was angry. Frustrated. Broken. Defeated. Mortified.

He was lying on the concrete, creating a kind of barrier on the street. People who were passing by just gave him a quick glance and then just continued on with their usual business.

"What is going on man? Are you alright?'' I spoke like I gave a shit.

"Just shut up Matt!'' He screamed, "I'm sick and tired of this shit. You don't know what you are getting yourself into, man, and I'm responsible for that!''

"Don't forget our goal man,'' I tried to deescalate the situation, "We are in this together, man, why are you so upset?''

"You don't get it now do you Matt? Okay, indulge me man, why didn't you have sex with her?''

"Sex, life, what is the difference? If anything, these pictures are always with me, they won't betray me, cheat on me, upset me or give me sexual diseases. I can use them at any time. I don't need to ask anyone for permission. I don't need to cater to it, feed it, listen to it, spend time with it. I have control over it. In many ways, life is the next step in the evolutionary process, satisfying the animalistic part of our imperfect brains which prevents us from thinking straight.''

He was crying as I spoke. After calming down a bit, he uttered:

"It's the drug talking in you Matt! I was thinking the same way when I started out and now I have to watch you do the same mistake I did. Listen to me, man: I met Mery three years ago, we fell in love instantly. We had so many beautiful moments together, but then we got involved in life. It started out great. We were happy that we could explore the candy aisle without having to cheat on one another, but the deeper we fell for the drug, the more it became clear to both of us that we enjoy life more than the presence of each other. Look at her now! Have you ever wondered why her voice is so soft? She is using heroin to avoid the disastrous low that follows the use of life. Me and her, we, we, tried to quit multiple times, we told each other that we were gonna push through if for nothing, than for our love. But that's not how drugs work

Matt! Neither me or her could give two shits about anyone around us, much less ourselves and our own bodies. I have decided to show you the misery and desperation this drug causes, but now I fear that I will create just another lost cause. You think that life is addictive and hard to quit? Imagine suffering a craving each time you see a female, each time you think about a female or every time that you see an object that reminds you of something that is arousing to you, you had to suffer the withdrawal of not being able to inject life!''

He was both shaking and crying, it was like watching an animal on its death throes.

"I'm currently seventeen hours, twenty minutes and forty eight seconds life-free, but not a millisecond has passed in which I have not considered relapse. I'm so angry and frustrated and I feel this pressure, this all consuming, all pervasive pressure in my heart, and no matter what I do I can't shake that feeling off.''

I pulled closer, handing him a copy of the banana picture of Mery while saying:

"It is only natural to inject life, don't punish yourself by going against your own desires. And as for your relationship problems, you should just have more confidence in yourself. Women love that shit.''

He didn't say a word, his entire being was fixated on the picture I gave him. After looking at it for five straight minutes, he uttered:

"I guess you are right, can you wait for like five minutes? There is something I gotta take care of.'' You could see a smile forming on his face, even though he's been sleep-deprived, looking like a zombie.

"Go ahead man, I will be waiting.'' I said, hoping this would finally stop this drama.

Ten minutes passed and he came back looking more awful than ever. He threw the remaining ashes in front of my legs and said:

"The pressure is gone, but I feel so empty man.''

"Take a cigarette man, it helps.''

I was the expert now even though he was the one who showed me that trick.

"There is one more thing I gotta show you Matt and then I will check myself into a rehab. I really can't do this anymore, but I can't quit on my own. Even though the pressure was gone a moment ago, now it's back and I want to inject life again.''

He spat on the ground and continued:

"I need help Matt. Maybe I just have an addictive personality or some underlying psychological condition that is causing me to have problems with life. I'm glad you are fine though.'' He said with a weak smile.

"I'm glad you opened your eyes John, what is this thing you wanna show me?'' I was curious.

"I'm completely leaving the scene and I'm gonna leave you all of my contacts and consumers, but I have to introduce you to the main producer of life first, so that you can have the best shit in town.''

"Its getting late man, why not wait for tomorrow?'' I asked.

"He only accepts visits at nights,'' John answered.

"Well then, lets go!'' I encouraged him.

We took a Taxi and drove for a long time.

Going through the cities at night was like watching humanity stripped down to its core, completely naked and aware of their true, animalistic nature. The prostitutes smoking cigarettes in skimpy clothes, the sketchy guy with a Mohawk pacing up and down, the lonely man walking down the streets; paranoid of his surroundings.

The occasional drunk guy shouting obscenities at imagined foes, the screams, the gunshots, the smell, that rotten feeling… They were all part of a bigger picture which made Denver the true mirror of humanity and an accurate reflection of our society and its failures.

We left the city and the taxi driver was getting nervous because the fare had already amounted to 100$. John handed him a 50 note and like magic, his worries disappeared.

The streets were dark, darker than usual, the only lights around were actually produced by the Taxi car itself. John had to navigate the direction we were going because the driver claimed he had never been at this place before.

"I'm glad you haven't.'' John remarked.

We stopped at a huge castle, located in the middle of nowhere. The castle itself was shining, not with light, but with a sort of ominous, spectral glimmer. It was as big and wide as the Chinese wall. John paid the taxi driver and now we were standing in front of the castle. It seemed even bigger now and I was getting cold feet.

"Here take these, gotta have an offering for the Master.''

John said, while giving me some pictures.

To my shock and surprise, those were pictures of me! I was still in disbelief but bloody hell those really some really nice pictures! Might have to inject again.

"Where the hell did you get these man, what the fuck dude?!'' I got into his face.

"Calm down Matt. I took them while you were unconscious. You said that you wanted to help me and others. You wanted to become a part of the cycle of life. The only way to play the game is to offer a piece of yourself. You are holding that piece in your hand. What your action with it is going to be, Matt, is entirely up to you.'' He was so calm and I was so pissed.

"You can turn around right now and never come back here ever again, you can destroy those pictures, but you will never get to see the true face of life. Make your choice and make it quick.'' Now he got into my face.

I was feeling so many fucking emotions that I just wanted to not exist. Anger, shame, curiosity, disgust, lust and anxiety. They were all mixed and spread equally inside my body. I took a huge amount of air, and then exhaled a bunch of it back into the world. It seemed to ease the tension a bit.

John backed off a little and I clenched the fist that was holding the pictures. Should I really sacrifice my natural dignity, natural confidence, natural peace of mind, natural courage, natural energy and natural self-respect just for some information on life?

You bet your ass I will! Not only do I enjoy life, but I can control my intake, unlike some weak willed people around me.

I didn't even answer John. I just headed straight to the front door.

John followed.

Standing in front of the castle I was once again astounded by the sheer monstrosity of it. The front door

was covered in gold, capturing the attention of my eyes even in the darkness that surrounded me. On top of the castle door, there was a sign engraved which said: " Property of You"

John opened the door without knocking and I followed his lead. The hall we entered was filled with mirrors. Mirrors everywhere. We were even standing on mirrors. There was no furniture, no decoration, no doors, no windows, no nothing.

Just mirrors and a short Asian guy watching his own reflection on the other side of the hall. John was playing with the reflection the mirrors created by moving parts of his body further away or closer to the mirrors. This shit was making me paranoid so I approached the little guy while saying:

"Hello, who is the owner of this establishment?'' I felt really cool for having the courage to speak to an unknown human being.

He made a 180 turn and was now facing me. He didn't say a word but what I saw scared the hell out of me. He wasn't even five feet tall yet his mere presence struck fear into me. His black colored eyes were literally burning with fire. The air around him was just dying, it became harder to breathe the more time he spent looking at me. I wanted to speak but my mouth just wasn't opening.

He realized that and said:

"You got something to say you fucking shitstain? You don't speak unless you are being spoken to, you absolute fucking dogshit, okay?''

I wanted to tell this little midget to fuck off but I just couldn't. Instead, I just nodded.

Meanwhile, a group of people entered the castle: Three men and one woman. The Asian guy simply flipped me

off and walked towards them. I had never felt as powerless as I was right now.

Why did no one have any empathy for me?

John came to me and told me to pull myself together.

“You’re talking to yourself, Matt.”

He asked me about my pictures and I told him that they were in my pockets. He urged me to give them to the motley crew assembled behind us.

But I was just so out of it. I didn’t know what to do.

Suddenly, attention was given to me and John.

"What are you two shitstains doing up there with your thumbs up your fucking assholes, circlejerking each other the entire fucking day.’’

“Matt, you need to stop talking to yourself. I understand this is all a bit of a shock to you, but this is what YOU wanted.”

We marched towards the crew. I handed them the pictures while asking what they were gonna do with them.

"Can you just shut the fuck up kid? I’m trying to make a video over here!’’ He said while stripping the girl of her clothes, very aggressively.

“Matt, leave the girl alone! What the fuck are you doing, Matt?” John had never seen such an adverse reaction to life.

Three men stood around us, with their pants removed and their dicks sticking out, ready for stimulation. John joined them and gave me a hand sign to come with him. I obliged because I felt like I had no will of my own anyways.

We made a circle around her, while I was fiddling with the camera. The room full of mirrors made things trippy.

The girl was especially scared. She was surrounded by pictures, her own.

Some of them were taken decades ago. She was of Mexican descent, you could clearly recognize that by her brown skin and big juicy Mexican butt. She took a bunch of pictures and started handing them to me.

She begged me to take them, making a prayer sign with her hands. I looked over John and his smirk told me everything: She was a lost cause.

The Asian guy came back and signaled to us to start masturbating. He came into the middle of the circle, pulled her hair, whipped out his fifteen inch cock and started thrusting it inside of her. This was actually getting kind of hot and I was starting to enjoy myself. It got even better when her pussy collapsed.

She screamed, she cried, she shat herself, but nobody cared. We were all too engulfed by the beauty of what was happening around us.

Her pictures were lit, and we all injected her life force into us.

Just before climaxing, the Asian guy looked into the camera and said:

"To my Mexican viewers you guys, no offense, nothing personal.''

He punched her in the face and started kicking her all over her body while screaming:

"Fuck you you fucking Mexican piece of shit, fucking absolute fucking dogshit Mexican.''

Her screams became louder at first, but then she just stopped responding at all.

John looked at me in disbelief: “Matt…”

I turned to face him, but he fell silent.

All five of us ejaculated directly onto her face at the same time, she moved her head a little in disgust. I was glad that she wasn’t dead, but she was badly injured.

The Asian guy pulled out a gun and all five of us collapsed to the ground, joining her, with our hands above our heads.

“Matt! Matt! You’re losing yourself!”

He told her to put her hands up in the air or that she was fucking dead. She tried so hard to actually listen to him. I saw the spirit, the willpower and the determination she tried to use to actually put her hands up in the air, but her body just wasn’t up to par with her demands.

He shot her five times in the head while saying: "I gave you a fucking chance! Should have put your hands up you fucking shitstain!’’

I was the first one to hear the police sirens. I got up and started panicking. The Asian guy whipped out his gun again and I found myself on the ground again.

"Okay you fucking shitstains. Moral of the story. Moral of the fucking story; you are all fucking dogshit. You are fucking dogshit, you too, you too and you too. Just fucking trash.’’ He was speaking to John and the other three men.

“Matt. You just killed a person.”

Then he turned to me and said:

"And you kid? You are just the biggest steaming pile of shit I have ever seen. You should just fucking kill yourself, okay?''

While he was saying that, a police officer had already broken the front door. As the Asian guy saw that, he turned to us once again and said his goodbyes in the form of:

"Okay you guys, I'm signing out.''

And as if he were a magician, he disappeared into thin air, never to be seen in his human form ever again. I still thought of him and his words when I was engaging life later on in my life.

John jumped me for some reason, kicking something out of my hands. I was on the ground.

We had a bigger problem on our hands. Left with a dead body and all the evidence was pointing at us. The police came in like a storm. We were surrounded by around fifty police officers in a matter of seconds.

They were all shouting at us to keep our heads down and not to move. The funny thing was that nothing much had changed in terms of our gunpoint situation. It didn't really matter who was pointing the gun at us, some Asian guy or some guys in blue suits. We were all scared shitless. One police officer, probably their leader, emerged from the crowd and said:

"You boys got a lot of explaining to do.''

Oh my fucking God, it was the same guy that stopped us in the car. I would have rather been dead than have to listen to his bullshit a second longer. He noticed me, told me to stand up and gave me a friendly pat on the back while saying:

"I'm sure you will be of much help in our little case over here.''

I felt something heavy hit my head, then it all went black again.

AND

Do you know what I hate even more than being woken up by construction work? Being woken up by bright lights fucking with my eyes.

I was in a small room, surrounded by grey walls. I was sitting on an uncomfortable wooden chair, my hands and legs chained. There were two other men with me in the room, both policemen. One of them was the guy that had hit me with something, probably his baton and the other I didn't recognize.

They both wore serious faces.

I swear to God if they are gonna do the bad cop, good cop bullshit, I will find a way to kill myself.

As I leaned in on my chair I noticed a huge bump on the back of my head and you can be sure as hell that it hurt.

"What the hell was this for?!'' I tried to point to my head but with little success, considering the fact that I could barely move my arms.

"I had to make sure that you drugged up druggies don't be making no trouble, it was a sticky situation and you can be glad that you got there alive, son. I actually did you a favor,'' said the one that hit me.

He was also the one that was sitting next to me. The one that was standing, however, banged his fists on the table, shouting in my face:

"You druggie scum should just all die at once!'' They were actually fucking doing this.

"Okay you guys, just tell me what the hell you actually want from me and I will tell you everything, but please

don’t play games with me. I’m not a child!’’ I huffed as I said that.

The leader motioned to his colleague, the bad cop, to leave the room. He left the room and now it was just me and him. He studied my face for a few seconds before saying:

"We know that the woman was killed with a gun, but we didn’t find a gun on the scene, we can start with that.’’

"We were also threatened by him, that is why when you entered, we already were on the ground! I don’t know his name. Asian, under five feet, short hair, creepy smile, deep voice. That is all I know about him.’’

I was honest and I hoped he would believe me, although this sounds as implausible as anything I have ever heard in my life.

"I have been doing this job for over twenty years, how stupid do you think I’m, kid? Your friends back there said the same thing and I’m supposed to believe you guys?’’

He was now pacing up and down, from one corner of the room to another.

"We checked every database, every computer, every piece of information we could get our hands on, but not a single scrap we found. He doesn’t exist. You guys have made him up to cover up for the murder.’’

"Officer, I would never kill a human being. I swear it on my mothers grave!’’

I actually wouldn’t but I really liked watching her die. That piece of dogshit fucking Mexican deserved it.

"Woah, calm down there son. This is not the reason we got you in here. In your pockets, we have found three ounces of life from two different sources. Both of them

very graphic and very illegal, but I’m sure you already know that.’’

He put his hands on the table, palms open. "You would be facing up to twenty years for that much, but because this is your first offense and bla bla bla the jury might be merciful to you. I’m gonna be honest with you kid: You can either choose a recovery program or you are gonna be stuck in prison for a long time.’’

He tried his hardest to put much emphasis on the word "long’’. I mean I don’t really understand what the fuss is all about. I don’t know why they think they could ever separate me and Melissa. As soon as I leave the program I will reconnect with the perfection that is her beauty.

"I will choose the recovery program, sir. I want to get clean and become a productive member of our society!’’

I was a master manipulator if you haven’t noticed by now.

"Tell that to the jury. One more thing before we finish here, don’t think I won’t find out who the murderer was. I will see you again, boy.’’

That was the last time I’ve seen him in my life.

A guard escorted me back to my cell. It was a simple room with just one bed and a toilet, no windows, no sinks.

The trial was tomorrow so I didn’t really give a shit. I laid in bed thinking about Mery, Melissa and the Mexican girl.

I was also extremely happy because after I complete this program, I would have everything I really needed to film my documentary.

I didn’t really care about my job anymore, they can fire me, but they can't stop my rise to fame anyways. John came back into my mind again. I wasn’t really concerned

about him, but the money we made from Mery. That was my money after all. Not to mention his weird behavior in the room of mirrors. Life must've hit him hard.

But Mery… such a fiery soul, condemned to a life of desperation and solitude. Just thinking about her pain and sorrow made it so hard to concentrate.

I had realized something: I could create life using my thoughts!

Sure, it isn't as good as the real deal, but it is a great substitute in times like these.

I pretended the entire ritual and in a matter of seconds, fell asleep from a combination of exhaustion and ecstasy caused by life.

The guard opened my cell door. The door keys were making the most annoying sound ever waking me from my slumber.

"Time to get moving, it's your big day.'' He said in a very monotone voice.

"Don't I get a lawyer or something like that?'' I remarked.

"Trash like you doesn't deserve lawyers, get your ass moving.''

He put on some special handcuffs on me, my hands couldn't even move an inch and they were so damn heavy. We walked for like a minute and then entered what I assume was the main hall. It was filled with people from all walks of life: Some old, some young, some stupid looking, some intelligent looking, some male, some female, most of them ugly.

We even had a panel consisting of twelve members which accurately represented the audience I described above.

Our judge was a white female in her 30's with curly hair and okayish tits.

Around her were two side judges or whatever the fuck you call those guys that just sit there starring at you without uttering a single word.

The guard walked me down to my seat, took off my manacles (finally) and remained stationary right next to me. I didn't have a lawyer, but I also couldn't spot the prosecutor among the crowd so I was pretty confident in myself.

"I call this court to order. My name is yadda, yadda, yadda..''

I didn't listen to her introduction. We will just call her curly bitch from here on out. So the curly bitch asks me about

my home life, my parents and my relationship with them, basic shit like that. I bullshit my way through the answers and she seemed pretty impressed by my advanced ability of articulating myself.

After the initial babble, we come to the main discussion which is my involvement with life. I told her about John and Tyrone and I even mentioned Mery. She asked me about the stuff we were selling. I gave her an accurate description of Tyrone.

After that, the members of the jury each had their own little speeches where they gave their own thoughts and whatnot. The only one I fancied was from a guy in his 50's. He basically came up and said:

"You damn kids always find new ways to get high. In my time we had to use magazines! Now it's all digital and shit.''

He didn't know what the hell he was talking about, but it was somehow charming to me. It reminded me of the old cowboy movies in which the good guy always delivered a victory speech right after defeating the bad guy.

The others reminded me how I was a scourge to society, how I was responsible for the downfall of today's youth, how I was poisoning the minds of our generation and how I had a disease within myself that had to be cured.

They called it the Gets Addicted To Everything Disease Drug Life Destroyer Addiction Syndrome (GATEDDLDAS). While calling me the scum of the earth, most of them had also suggested rehabilitation and therapy through medication.

After hearing them out, the jury gave me a chance to speak my final words. This is what I said:

"I would like to thank everyone for their input. I like how on one hand I’m someone that needs help and has a disease and on the other hand I’m a terrible person. I like how you all care about my mental health and well-being, yet ostracize me, put me in a box outside of my own social circle and then expect me not to go insane. I like how you like to put the blame on the drug, my genes or my upbringing yet the only one who will have to rot in a cell is me. I like how you offer me rehabilitation and help, yet stigmatize me, permanently, as someone not to be trusted. I like how you offer cures as if you had them in the palms of your hands, yet you yourself don’t even know what the hell you are curing. Given all of this information, I would like to thank everyone for making me feel like there is something wrong with my body or myself. This information is really going to help me reintegrate into society, become a productive member of the community and not fall back into my old vices. Really well thought out and carried out.’’

I started clapping and everyone, including the judge and jury, joined me.

Curly bitch shed a tear and said:

"It is remarkable that a young man such as yourself understands just how awesome we are. We try so hard to fix everyone and everything, we even fix things that aren’t broken! I will be taking your wisdom and understanding of the situation into account when coming up with the verdict.’’

I was sentenced to thirty days of mandatory rehabilitation at Dr. Manfred's Clinic for Life Addicts and ninety days of community service.

REPEAT

DAY ONE

Immediately after the hearing, they put me in a van with a few other people. Not only did they handcuff us, but we also had our eyes covered the entire time. When I asked why, I got no response. When they finally decided to remove my cover, I found myself in a tiny room with big white walls.

My hands and legs were spread apart and I was handcuffed to two poles. My right hand and leg to one and my left hand and leg to another. The guy removing the cover from my eyes told me that this was all necessary in order to avoid relapse in the first 72 hours.

I shit you not, he was in a fucking astronaut costume and it was the ugliest costume I had ever seen in my life. Am I being experimented upon? I forgot to mention that I was stripped down of any clothes and that there was a razor blade continuously spinning four inches from my body. This meant that if I got a craving, or was unsupportive of my rehabilitation, I would get chopped. Interesting.

The astronaut guy left the room and I started inspecting my surroundings more closely. There was absolutely nothing to see in the room, just the whiteness of the walls. On the ceiling, however, there were some written rules: "The twelve facts of recovery for men''.

This was actually quite fascinating to me, considering the fact that I had nothing to do. I quickly studied them and memorized every single one of them. I was a genius after all. They were:

1. It sure must suck to have shitty genes.

2. Your inherent brain chemistry is fucked up bro, only God can help ya.

3. The only thing you can actually do is pray, because you were born fucked up.

4. Take it one day at a time bro, for like, ever.

5. Recovery never ever ends, just one sip of life and you're fucked.

6. Install various media blockers on your computer, that will totally help.

7. Gauge your eyes out or alternatively, make everyone in the presence of you cover themselves to avoid cravings and triggers. Religion approves.

8. Cold showers, lifting and meditation will prevent you from relapsing on life.

9. It sure must suck to be the only one in your friends circle with an addictive personality.

10. It will get better, the urges get fewer as time passes.

11. There will be good days and bad days, if you're going through hell, just keep going bro.

12. Read 10) and 11) again and ask yourself how deluded someone has to be in order to utter both statements at once.

I opened my eyes, looked at the ceiling again and was astounded by my quick memory. They were all recited in order and I didn't add or miss a word. I told you I was a genius.

I felt very tired and worn out from all this mental work so I closed my eyes, trying not to think about Melissa and drifted into sleep.

DAY TWO

"Good morning there, young fellow, my name is Dr. Manfred and you must be Matt.'' Another man in an astronaut costume said, while looking at something above my head.

"So Matt, tell me, how have you been feeling? Have you gotten any cravings yet?''

Little did he know that his costume reminded me of life in space.

I was squirming, closing my eyes, trying to focus on my breath, but the more I tried to ignore it the more the craving grew. I need some fucking ashes right now.

"Turn the fucking saw blade off please!'' I begged him.

He obliged and said:

"Matt, it has come to my attention that you are sick. I think that you are in need of a mental reboot. The only way to stop the cravings is a combination of cold showers and methadone. Do you agree to that?''

"Anything to make the craving stop!''

My hands were shaking, they were drawn to life as if it were the only thing I had. As if I was somehow magically connected to it by forces unknown to me. I tried to free myself so that I could shoot up the life I had in my pockets, but the poles were made out of thick metal. I had to watch myself rise and fall, damned, plagued.

I couldn't satisfy my life porn craving..

I had to suffer three minutes of pure agony before Dr. Manfred shot me up with some methadone. In a matter of seconds, my life force went limp and I was satisfied.

Dr. Manfred went on to say:

"You are a victim of life. Coupled with your addictive personality, the result can only be disaster. You will never be cured from the craving and you will have to suffer it for the rest of your life. You can only opt to control it with medication, meditation, cold showers and exercise. I forgot to mention that it is impossible to stop permanently, because life is in fact a natural craving. One last thing, the moment you relapse you are done for. All the progress which you have made during the years will go lost. You have to understand that you are a drug addict and that only one sip of the juicy, amazing, forbidden apple that is life means failure. You will also have to use much willpower in order not to relapse. Don't worry though, it gets better each and every step of your recovery. Also, beware of PAWS (Post Acute Withdrawal Symptoms), they are a real pain in the ass and conflict with my last sentence but I'm not the one addicted amiright?''

From here on out I was just knocked out cold. I was in a dream land where I had all the life I could imagine.

Methadone is a really cool medication.

DAY THREE

72 hours had passed and I was unchained. I was too weak from the methadone so I was carried into my room. I felt like a child being carried by his caring parents. It felt really nice.

It was a simple room: A bed, a small TV and a small window. They even allowed me to have one phone call. I phoned John because I was bored and who else was I to call? My stupid mom wouldn't be able to handle the

situation and my work colleagues couldn’t care less about me.

“John?”

He hung up. Life must’ve really taken its toll on him.

After the call, another astronaut costume came in with my daily shot of methadone. As she went on to give me the shot, her glove slipped and revealed a piece of her beautiful hand. I instantly got a craving and she started screaming.

Meanwhile, Dr. Manfred was just entering my room and saw what had happened. She was fired on the spot and Dr. Manfred shot me up while reminding me that tomorrow is a big day because he himself would hold a presentation on life addiction. I was KO’ed once again by the medication.

I closed my eyes and invited darkness to take over my consciousness.

DAY FOUR

Dr. Manfred stood on the podium, guiding people to sit down and get ready for his speech. All of us were put into various unattractive astronaut costumes. Dr. Manfreds had a doctor's sign on it so it was easy to distinguish him from the rest of the crowd.

We sat on wooden chairs, everyone's attention being focused on the podium. No one even dared to look at each other, much less get to know each other in fear of suffering a craving. Dr. Manfred tested his microphone and started speaking: "Dopamine is the reason for all of your troubles, my little lab rats. You see, just like animals, your reward circuit has been captured by the steady arms of life. The amazing high one gets when he engages in life immediately urges him to shoot up ashes to satisfy his natural cravings. Your only hope is to abstain from life

as much as you can. The thing is that we don't really know why some people suffer from life addiction while others can take it or leave it whenever they want to without suffering any consequences. If we were able to neutralize the gene in our brain that causes life addiction we might come closer to an answer. Until we get a funding of at least 420 billion dollars, such a thing just isn't possible. If we only knew how gene RTRD317 was complimenting gene IDOT888, our job would be so much easier. But as long as we lack funding and test subjects in their 20's who have never been influenced by life, we can only do so much to help.''

"That is bullshit!'' One of the audience members said.

He was sitting in the first row and one could sense that he was here longer than anyone else.

"I completely agree, but as long as we as a society prefer funding wars and dank memes over scientific progress, change is unlikely to occur.'' Dr. Manfred dropped the mic and left the podium.

The speech was over.

DAY TEN

I was assigned to be a part of the super motivational anti-life curing group called "OnLife''.

There, we shared experiences and tactics on how to go about our day to day lives while recovering from our debilitating addiction.

We all sat in a circle and had a chance to share motivational quotes that helped us push further and not give up on giving up. Person number one spoke up:

"We must suffer one of two things. The pain of discipline or the pain of regret and disappointment.''

Everyone cheered him on, person number ten said:

"This really put my suffering into another perspective. Thank you!''

Person number two spoke up:

"Ever since I stopped engaging in life, I also deleted Facebook!''

The cheers could be heard from outside. Some were turning their heads in disbelief: The madman deleted Facebook? Verily a martyr!

I got bored quickly. I mean I knew that life was natural and that it helped me spur my imagination. The only reason I even man-aged to quit for so long is because of cold showers and the medication they have been giving me.

DAY THIRTEEN

We lost two members of our group today and we are trying to learn from their relapse. They were both in the same room when one of them sneezed. The snot reminded them of life, which triggered them, and because their willpower had been drained, they relapsed.

Sneezing was now officially banned in our community.

DAY TWENTY THREE

We lost another member of the community.

While sleeping, his own body unwillingly stabbed his arms and legs using the utensils he ate from.

When he woke up to the unpleasant surprise, he hanged himself.

We learned from his mistake and now slept with our hands chained to our beds.

DAY THIRTY

I was finally released today. Everyone in the community felt so proud of me and they wished me the best of luck in my never-ending journey to freedom.

I really was a changed man: I realized just how awesome prescription drugs were.

EPILOGUE

Matt relapsed as soon as he got out of rehab. He is now living on the streets, selling his body for a shot of heroin. He also became a well known distributor of life.

John stood by his words, but even after years had passed, the craving didn't go away and he had to exercise willpower each and every waking moment of his life.

After an extraneous investigation, the police found out the culprit for the murder of the Mexican girl. They looked in the mirrors inside of the castle and realized that it was them who were to blame. Over a hundred policemen were stripped off their titles and put into jail.
Their leader committed suicide.

Dr. Manfred put the time with his patients into good use and wrote a bestselling book entitled "$cience is here to help".

Matt's mother died of a broken heart.

AFTERWORD

A disease, a disaster, a catastrophe, a plague… You can call it whatever you want to, but the fact of the matter is that nowadays the word ‘addiction’ is so widely misused that it has become close to meaningless.

A label which we use to describe a condition is which the user is unable to stop himself from engaging in his vices despite considerable disadvantages or despite numerous attempts to quit.

Not only do we as a society give up on such individuals by marking them as different from ourselves, but it has come to our attention that the number of ‘addictions’ that spawn over time has exponentially increased since the last century.

Nowadays you will find video game addictions, porn addictions, social media addictions, smartphone addictions, exercise addictions…

Scientists are having a hard time catching up on all of them on an individual level, be it because of inadequate funding or a lack of subjects affected by the addiction they are faced with.

My personal view on why we as a society think that certain people are ‘addicted’ is because we fail to understand why they even do it in the first place: pleasure, escape, relaxation, stress relief, euphoria…

These are all self reported benefits of engaging in their vices. Even when those vices consume their lives completely, and when they decide to ‘sober up’ and quit, they suffer and feel like they are making a genuine sacrifice each and every day of their ‘sober lives’.

They cling on to their previous life, the one full of pleasure and joy, where they could enjoy all the benefits of engaging in their vices.

I remember when I first tried to quit smoking. I failed a million times, but one of those times I managed to make it for quite a long time; The first two weeks felt horrible and I was feeling really depressed. After that, the craving did subside a bit, but the hole in my chest wasn't closing. There was something amiss in my life. Nicotine filled that gap and made me a normal person or so I believed.

When I realized that this hole was in fact created by the drug and not an inherent part of my being, I could see the truth: Cigarettes didn't relieve my stress, they didn't give me a high, they didn't make my life in any way better or more enjoyable. On the contrary, they caused me nothing but misery and frustration.

The next time I quit, coupled with the knowledge above I didn't suffer any cravings or had to endure any withdrawal symptoms during my 'quit'.

The point I'm trying to make is that 'addicts' engage in their habits because they are convinced that they bring them genuine pleasure and make their day to day lives more bearable.

Imagine there existed a lever. If you pull the lever, you are awarded with the biggest high of your life. There is a downside to this however: If you pull the lever more than ten times, you will die. You can pull it nine times, quit and never suffer any negative consequences.

Would you be able to pull it only nine times?

I know I would fail and that I would be among the first ones to succumb and die.

Imagine the lives of those who actually resist the temptation and never pull the lever for the tenth time, what must their lives look like?

You can be sure as hell that their lives would suck ass: Plagued by withdrawal symptoms and annoyed by constant cravings.

Now imagine the same scenario, except when you pull the lever you would be getting absolutely nothing at all. Sure, there would be some idiots who would pull it for the 10th time, but the majority would either quit or never even start in the first place.

Would those who quit have withdrawal symptoms? Would they suffer?

The problem is that we describe ‘addictions’ as very pleasurable activities, yet always warn the user not to overindulge because of the negative consequences some time down the road.

This obviously doesn’t work, who would want to play video games two hours a day when they can get so much more out of playing ten hours a day?
Why would I be satisfied with two hours of stress relief when I can be stress free for ten hours?

Some people do manage to control their intake, some don’t and most are under the radar.

We take those who can as positive examples and label those who cannot as ‘addictive personalities’, ‘sick’, ‘diseased’…

This book has been written to show you just how silly we look like when we try to "cure addicts’’

I wrote a book entitled "Fap No More!’’ which in accurate detail explains how we never even wanted to masturbate in the first place, how masturbation doesn’t relieve but potentiate our sexual cravings, how pornography is actually harmless and how the only craving we have ever ‘suffered’ was the craving of wanting to have sex.

I can imagine you smirking right now and asking me about your dopaminic reuptake receptors or all the endorphiphiphinis which are being released when watching porn or masturbating.

Check out my book "Fap No More!'' to learn the entire truth.

I sincerely hope that we can stop this ‘addiction’ madness that is plaguing our society by changing the way we approach drugs and "pleasurable'' activities.

- Kristijan Bralo, 07. 05. 2014.